

In the Claims

Please delete the heading Claims at the left-hand margin.

Before claim 1, please insert the following heading at the left-hand margin:

I Claim:

Please amend claims 1-16 as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus comprising: a vacuum filler (3) for stuffing a casing (4) of any kind with a pasty substance, [and] a clip module (1) for applying a clip (2) to a stuffed casing (4), [characterized in that] and the clip module (1) [is] adapted to be driven by the vacuum filler (3).

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the clip module (1) comprises a part (5) which is adapted to be rotatably driven by the vacuum filler (3).

3. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein [one of the claims 1 or 2, characterized in that] the vacuum filler comprises a part (8) which is adapted to be rotatably driven and by means of which the clip module (1) can be driven.

4. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein [one of the claims 1 to 3, characterized in that] the clip module (1) and the vacuum filler (3) have arranged between them a shaft (6), [which is] the shaft (6) being connected to the vacuum filler (3) for driving the clip module (1)[, said shaft (6) being preferably a horizontally extending shaft].

5. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~one of the claims 1 to 4,~~ characterized in that the clip module (1) comprises a displacer (7).

6. An apparatus according to claim 1, and [one of the claims 1 to 5, characterized in that] means [are] provided for inserting one of a thread and [or] a loop when the clips are being set.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, and [one of the claims 1 to 6, characterized in that] a separator (16) is provided for separating respective portions.

8. An apparatus according to claim 1, and [one of the claims 1 to 7, characterized in that] a servomotor (9) of the vacuum filler (3) [can be] used for driving the clip module

(1)[, said servomotor (9) being preferably adapted to be used for driving also other functions, such a the twisting off].

9. An apparatus according to claim 1, and [one of the claims 1 to 8, characterized in that] a control unit (10) is provided for controlling the stuffing, the portioning and the clipping[and, preferably, also the separating and the suspending].

10. An apparatus according to claim 1, and [one of the claims 1 to 9, characterized in that] a twist-off unit (11) is provided adjacent to a stuffing means of the vacuum filler (3).

11. An apparatus according to claim 1, and [one of the claims 1 to 10, characterized in that] an [preferably] automatic suspension unit (12) for selectively suspending the casing (4) is provided, [said] the suspension unit (12) being one of controlled and[/or] driven [preferably] by the vacuum filler (3) and[/or] the clip module (1).

12. A method of applying to a casing (4) of any kind a clip (2) by means of a clip module (1), said method comprising the steps of: stuffing the casing (4) with a pasty substance by means of a vacuum filler (3), separating the portions, applying a clip (2) by means of a clip module (1), and driving [characterized in that] the clip module (1) [is driven] by the vacuum filler (3).

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein as to the separating step, [characterized in that] the portions are separated from one another.

14. A method according to claim 12, wherein [or 13, characterized in that] the separation and the setting of clips take place, at least partly, at the same time.

15. A method according to claim 12, wherein [one of the claims 12 to 14, characterized in that] the casing (4) is suspended automatically when the clips have been set.

16. A method according to claim 12, and wherein one of [the claims 12 to 15, characterized in that] a thread and [or] a loop is attached[, preferably when the clip (2) is being set].

Please add the following new claims 17-20.

17. (New) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the shaft (6) is a horizontally-extending shaft.

18. (New) An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the servomotor is adapted to be used for one of twisting off and for driving other functions.

19. (New) An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the control circuit is provided for additionally one of positioning, clipping, and both positioning and clipping.

20. (New) A method according to claim 16, wherein the one of the thread and loop is attached when the clip (2) is being set.